S V A School of VISUAL ARTS

MFA Visual Narrative
Frequently Asked Questions

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THE TOP QUESTIONS!

What is the difference between this and a pure illustration or other visually-based graduate program?
The MFAVN program is dedicated to the craft and process of visual storytelling and is designed to focus on the creation of original content and authorship - regardless of medium or profession - through the education of the "Artist as Author". The MFAVN is equally balanced between creative writing and visual expression. Every student will be required to author their own original content from conception to execution as both a writer and artist.

We are also low residency, requiring only three eight-week summer sessions in NYC, which allows students to maintain their professional practices and personal lifestyles.

Why is there such a broad approach to storytelling and how will that benefit me and my experience as a student?
We feel that a broad and diverse student body creates a rich and unique studio environment, and informs and challenges every student to engage in the ever-expanding profession of visual storytelling beyond their own chosen medium.

What are some career paths for the MFA in Visual Narrative graduate?
In all forms of advertising, plus fine arts, game design, picture books, graphic novels, film, illustration and animation, there is a growing demand for talented and original content creators. The MFA Visual Narrative program fills that need—regardless of

medium or style—enabling students to become creative, responsible arbiters of visual storytelling, able to shape their own identities, artistic voices and narrative art.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Who is the ideal candidate and what skills do they need to bring to the table?
Every year we will be looking for talented storytellers who are interested in generating their own original content as both an author and an artist.

That being said, students will need to be well - versed in traditional art, familiar with digital art practices and possess a thirst for the English language with a passion for putting it to good narrative use. Hand-drawn, traditional art, short story and scriptwriting and design practices will dominate the first year of the program along with advanced digital techniques. During the second year, students will engage in traditional book arts and digital publishing, experimental writing, advanced typography, dabbling in a range of writing genres and a bit of character development and theatrical techniques. This process will prepare every student for the second year thesis project that will culminate in a graduate thesis exhibition.

Though the MFAVN program is a broad approach to the craft and process of storytelling, the spring semester short story and final thesis project is an opportunity for each student to concentrate on a professional focus and/or direction of their choosing.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate technical proficiency in creative writing as well. Because of the nature of a low-residency program, successful students will be self-reliant and able to demonstrate a high level of professional discipline and practice.

All applicants to the MFA Visual Narrative program must have an undergraduate degree, or be scheduled to receive a degree before the start of the summer semester. However, your degree may be in any discipline.

The MFAVN program is NOT a fully staffed film or animation department. Nor are we dedicated to one single profession over another. The MFAVN program provides an advanced approach to the study, craft and process of visual storytelling as both an artist and an author. The student brings the medium, focus and professional practice to the program.

What is the application deadline?
Admissions will be rolling, that is, we will review applications until 20 students have accepted. The MFAVN application review process will begin in early February, so we urge all students to apply as soon as possible. If you are applying as an international student, be sure to allow extra time for visas and other paperwork that will be needed if you are accepted.

A few clarifications on the requirements…
You need only submit one "Statement of Purpose", using the guidelines in our Department Requirements section. This replaces the one requested in the General Requirements section. In addition, our department has replaced the "Writing Sample" in the General Requirements section with a specific assignment, which includes a short story/visual narrative project, along with a written statement supporting the applicant's choice of the project themes listed. Details are available in the Department Requirements section. As an option, additional writing samples can be submitted as part of your Supplementary Material.

Nathan Fox, Chair
MFA Visual Narrative
nfox@sva.edu
212-592-2390

STRUCTURE & LOGISTICS

Tell me more about the low residency model.
Our low residency program is structured as a combination of two academic years of web-based learning from wherever students may hail and three intensive on-campus summer periods in NYC. During the on-line periods, students engage in rich-media coursework, with supervision from faculty and opportunities to engage virtually with fellow students. The student will be required to submit written material and participate in online forums, as well as contribute online content as both a writer and visual artist.

What are the dates for the summer residency?
Classes begin June 3, 2013 and run through July 26. Subsequent years will be held in a similar block of time. There will be some orientation programming a few days prior to the start. We will also provide training for the web-based learning that will begin in the fall.

Does SVA offer housing?
SVA dorm housing is guaranteed for our students for the summer sessions if you apply for it by May 1, and the fee will be approximately $2100 for a single room for the duration.

How much time can I expect to spend on my work/classes?
For the online workload, a guideline is three or four hours of coursework for each credit hour. So for six credit hours of class weekly, you should expect 18-24 hours of coursework time. During the first year spring semester short story project and second year thesis project, those class hours and work times will be directly related to each individual's project.

During the eight-week summer semester in NYC, students will be in class or in their studios for 40-50 hours per week. We will also be planning studio visits and individual and group critiques, trips to museums and galleries and other cultural events.

There is currently no part-time structure for this program.

What other access will I have to professionals?
The MFA Visual Narrative program has lined up a rich and diverse pool of cross- disciplinary professionals who will be involved in the program as guest lecturers, artists and authors. During the second year online courses and third summer session, each student will work with the chair to nominate and collaborate with a mentor or thesis advisor of their choosing for the duration of their thesis project. A roster of professionals is posted on our site.

What is the tuition for this program?
Tuition and fees are outlined in the grad catalogue.

What are my options for financial aid?
The SVA Office of Financial Aid coordinates the many sources of aid to meet as much of the students' financial needs as possible. Their site includes a listing of free scholarship search engines. The grad catalogue has some useful background starting on page 263, including some scholarship resources.

We are in the early stages of starting our own scholarship program.

Is the program accredited by NASAD?
Yes, we are fully accredited.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Can international students apply to this program?
It is a perfect fit as students are only required to be on campus in NYC for three eight-week periods during three summers.

How long can they stay in the U.S.?
Students can be admitted to the U.S. 30 days before the summer semester begins, and stay for 60 days after the summer semester end date on a "grace period." Since MFA Visual Narrative students are not enrolled full time in the Fall and Spring semesters, students cannot stay in the U.S. on the F-1 visa during those times. This is because by law, full-time enrollment (minimum of 12-credits at SVA) is required to maintain a valid visa status. The Fall and Spring semesters of the MFA Visual Narrative program are offered online only and total less than full-time enrollment (only 6 credits per semester). For this reason, we cannot sponsor the visa during the Fall and Spring semesters. Please contact the International Student Office if you need any clarification on this issue: iso@sva.edu.

Detailed information for you can be found on SVA's international student page here which includes a FAQ section.

Are they eligible for F-1 visa benefits, such as employment eligibility?
Federal regulations are very strict about employment for F-1 students. MFA Visual Narrative students are only eligible to work on-campus during the summer semesters. They are not eligible for paid or unpaid off-campus employment or internships.

What is the English language requirement?
Fully half of our curriculum is devoted to developing creative writing skills, which makes it essential that students exhibit a strong command of both spoken and written English. MFA Visual Narrative applicants must have a minimum score of 100 (internet-based) or 250 (computer-based) TOEFL to be considered for admission.

AND FINALLY….

What are you waiting for…?!!!
Apply now!